

SAVES, INC.
P.O. BOX 404
LEWISTOWN, MT 59457
406-535-2303
Saves1@midrivers.com

March 7, 2013

To: House Judiciary Committee
From: Naomi Summers, Executive Director, SAVES, INC.
Re: SB 306 sponsored by Senator Olson- Revise Partner Family Member Assault Law.

Hello. SAVES, INC. appreciates the opportunity to be able to submit written testimony in support of SB 306. My name is Naomi Summers, Executive Director for a program covering Judith Basin, Wheatland, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Petroleum, Garfield, and Fergus Counties. We provide emergency services on a 24/7/365 day basis for victims of domestic and sexual violence. We strongly support Senate Bill 306 sponsored by Senator Olson.

We are asking to amend SB 306 of the existing PFMA statute to remove the language "persons of the opposite sex". This change is vitally important to us as we serve all victims without discrimination.

This amendment is needed so all victims of domestic violence are treated the same, and offenders are also held accountable in the same way. Domestic violence is the same in all family partner situations and we cannot treat same sex relationships any differently.

We believe that the language "persons of the opposite sex" is discriminatory and should be removed in order to maintain the integrity of the existing law.

One example of a case SAVES, INC handled involved a same sex female couple. One female attempted to strangle her long time partner while both were using marijuana. The offender pled guilty to aggravated assault only because the City Attorney could not offer her a plea deal to a lesser charge of PFMA. This resulted in a 5 year prison sentence. This was her first and only offense.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue. I strongly urge you to vote **YES on SB306** and move it to the House floor for consideration. If you have questions or comments please feel free to contact me for further information.

Sincerely,

Naomi Summers.